

# have a Nageela Shabbos

A KID FRIENDLY WEEKLY PUBLICATION OF NAGEELA WEST COAST JOYFULLY JEWISH EXPERIENCES

SEASON 4  
EPISODE 28

## PERSONAL DOUGHNATIONS BY RABBI DANI LOCKER



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Watch it rise, watch it grow

Smell it as you knead the dough

Rapid rise or take it slow

Get the perfect ratio

Be sure to snap a photo

When you braid your challah dough

Let it sit and watch it grow

Then call you mom to say hello

Before you bake it's apropos

To separate some gooey dough

Oven burn, or wrap and throw

Not like it was long ago

You'd find a Kohen whom you know

Upon him this you may bestow

Don't expect a quid pro quo

Give generously, even so

Just Challah



If you knead me

specific mitzvah. Whilst kneading dough (I think whilst should be used more, it's an awesome word), a small amount is separated. In biblical times, that dough was given to a Kohen. In case you've forgotten, a Kohen is a grandchild (or great- great- grand... you get the idea) of the original High priest, Aaron. This special family's job was to be the spiritual leaders of the Jewish people- the Rabbis of the time- by doing all the holy work in the Temple and by teaching and guiding the Jewish people in the ways of the Torah.

Anyway, this small amount of dough, called 'challah', was separated and given to any Kohen the baker wanted to give it to. This gift (among others) allowed the Kohen to focus on their spiritual guidance jobs, without worrying about making money through farming, stock trading or professional basketball. Nowadays, instead of bestowing our challah on a real, live Kohen, the custom is to either burn the dough, or to wrap it up and discard it respectfully. This is the source of the word challah.

Now, please pay attention to one small detail I mentioned, that the baker could choose ANY Kohen he wants; this applied not only to challah, but to the other gifts that people gave to the Kohen. Well, that doesn't sound like the most logical system, does it?

I mean, let's say one Kohen is wildly popular because he's a successful YouTuber who streams live Korban videos. He might get more 'challah' than a different

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The word challah, usually reserved for the delicious braided bread often eaten on Shabbat, actually has a root in a very

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# Snake Venom

Dear Rabbi,

Is gossip a big deal? I hear a lot of stories and speeches about how Lashon Hara is just the worst. But, really, why? I understand it's not very nice to talk smack about someone, but is that it? Is there more to it? What if it's true?

Thank so much,

LeSean Harrah



**stump the  
rabbi**

*Stump the Rabbi is a forum where kids can ask ANY Jewish question. Have a question? Please send it in to [stump@nageelawest.org](mailto:stump@nageelawest.org)*

*Questions here are real. Names and some wording have been changed.*

Dear LeSean,

I'm completely stumped! Not about your question. I have a lot to say on the subject. I'm stumped as to how it's possible that I've printed 148 episodes of Nageela Shabbos and have not yet dedicated one to the idea of Lashon Hara! It's a super important topic, and it needs to be discussed at length. If you'd like a little background, we discuss it a bit in season 2, episode 29, and then again in season 3, episode 15, but never on these pages have we addressed the complex and terrible topic that is negative gossip, known as Lashon Hara (LH). This will probably take 2 or 3 weeks to cover, so let's start:

AHHHH! Where to start, where to start... there's so much to talk about!!!

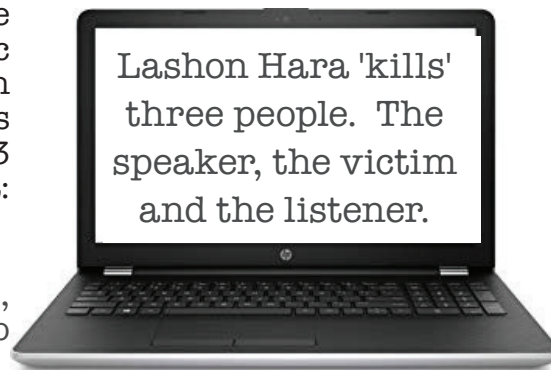
So what is LH? I'll give you two examples:

A. Sally just interviewed for a new summer job as a sports counselor at a local day camp. She is qualified for the job; excellent with kids and a fantastic athlete. You're talking to the camp's program director who you know is a huge Red Sox fan. "You know, Sally is a serious Yankees fan." you say. As you watch the director's face turn the color of his favorite team, you realize you may have made a mistake, Sally gets the job, but she is treated unfairly for the

entire summer.

B. Sally just interviewed for a new summer job as a sports counselor at a local day camp. She is qualified for the job; excellent with kids and a fantastic athlete. You're talking with the camp's program director and you tell him, "Sally is great for the job. She was always into sports. We were in school together, and let me tell you, she was a lousy student.

Just really bad at writing at science. Good girl, but not super intelligent." She keeps her job, and is treated fairly, because the director doesn't care about Sally's HIGH School grades.



**WHICH ONE OF THESE TWO STORIES IS LASHON HARA?**

If you said BOTH, you are correct! Speaking becomes LH when it does one of two things:

A. It hurts someone.

B. It is a negative thing to say.

Yes, those are two totally different things. In the above story A, the thing you said was not negative. There's nothing wrong with being a Yankees fan. HEY! Quiet down. I'll fight you! Yet Sally was hurt by what you said because she was mistreated. In story B, Sally was NOT hurt, but it's still LH because the thing you said

was inherently negative.

So, why is LH bad?

As Jews, we try to be careful about what goes into our mouths, and also about what comes out of our mouths. LH is so serious that there are many powerful statements in Talmudic and Kabbalistic writings that put it up there with one of the most selfish and hurtful things a person could do. The Midrash compares someone who speaks LH to a snake. Why a snake? Most dangerous animals attack because they're hungry. They bite. They eat. Snakes will often bite with no intention of eating (in fairness to snakes, it's usually for defense). They just bite, kill and move on to get their meal somewhere else! LH does not help the person who speaks it. If someone steals- well, we are not fans of stealing, yet we can understand the temptation. When you steal, you now have something you did not have before. When a person speaks negatively about someone else, they both get hurt. The victim is devastated, and the speaker really gains nothing, except maybe a momentary feeling of power, which fades away real quick.

Actually, the Talmud says that Lahon Hara 'kills' three people. The speaker (who has hurt himself by sinking to such a terrible level), the victim (who is most obviously hurt) and also the listener. LH is an infectious disease (boy, do we know about those!) that hurts everyone exposed to it.

"Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never harm me." Have you heard that? It's a complete lie. It doesn't take a genius

to recognize that it's possible to hurt someone just as much, and often even more with words than with physical harm. Let me repeat that in other words. Hurting someone's feelings can be much, much more dangerous than an old fashioned punch in the nose. Have you ever been bullied with words? If you have, then you KNOW. If you haven't, you probably don't realize just how much it changes a person's entire life. Many, many professional studies link verbal abuse (that's pretty much what LH is) to long term depression, anxiety, anger management problems, OCD and paranoia. Simply put, most people who get a broken leg don't live a life of depression and pain. Yet people who get laughed at, mimicked, spoken (or written) about or shunned, often have severe lasting results.

So far we have established that it's a really good idea to avoid speaking about people in a way that is negative or in a way that can hurt them. EVEN if they follow the Red Sox. EVEN if you don't agree with their political opinions. EVEN if they disagree with the beautiful, traditional custom of drinking pickle juice.

We will continue next week, and hopefully journey together to a place of greater peace and friendship!

Have a Nageela Shabbos,

*the Rabbi.*

**DEEP  
THOUGHTS**  
WHAT IF THERE  
WERE NO  
HYPOTHETICAL  
SITUATIONS?

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

Happy Birthday to family members  
who have celebrated recently:

Leedor Bobli  
Ranit Stockman  
Meira Borsody  
Abby Boyd  
Ben Pheibush  
Aviel Ben yehuda  
Bar'el Gazala  
Joe Perry

*Mazel Tov*  
מזל טוב

To Sara Locker upon her engagement  
this week to Avi Silver!

*Mazel Tov*  
מזל טוב

To Binyamn Sherizen upon his  
engagement this week!



I accidentally gave my friend a glue stick instead of chap stick...

He's still not talking to me!

**OUCH! GROAN!**

got a better joke? Email it to [dlucker@nageelawest.org](mailto:dlucker@nageelawest.org)

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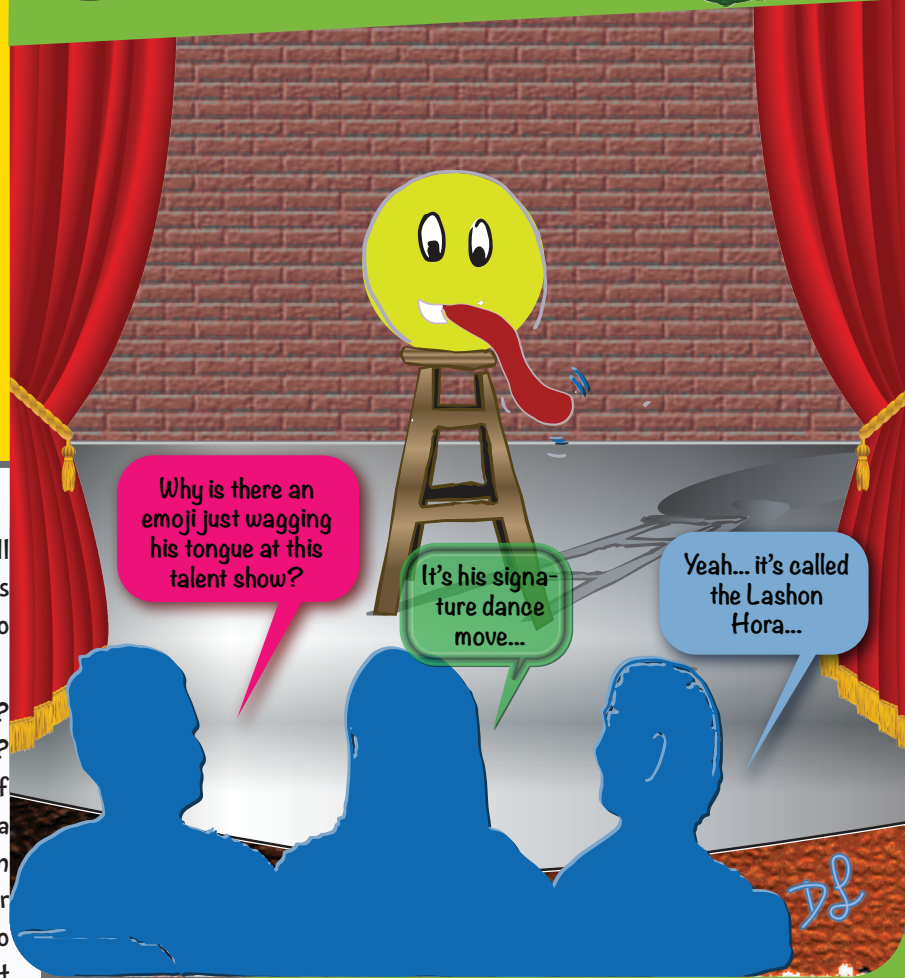
Kohen. Wouldn't it be smarter and fairer to just divide all the donations among the Kohanim equally? One approach is simply that this acts as an incentive for each Kohen to do his job really well. But I see another valuable lesson here.

What is the purpose- the TRUE purpose of a Kohen? Really, what's the purpose of any educator? To educate? Not so much. Sure, teaching stuff is a part of education. If you're a math teacher, that might be your only job. But a Torah educator needs to be a guide and a role model. Torah study is not about how many chapters you've mastered or how many pages you've turned, but how you've turned. So for a spiritual guide to have maximum effect, there's got to be a personal connection. If I give my 'challah taxes' to an office, and they distribute it to 'some Kohen' then I've missed out on the chance to chat, hang out, and connect to a potential role model.

Perhaps this is one reason why the Torah chooses the inefficient method of personal gifts over organized distribution. The system makes sure that we keep meeting people we should learn from, and that they, in turn, interact with us. Here's a thought. If you want to study Torah in 2020, you can go to one of dozens of websites, view virtual classes from thousands of Rabbis, watch YouTube videos (probably not of Korbanos, though) get Torah sheets delivered to your email inbox... we sometimes forget how important it is to connect with a teacher and role model in person. So next time you want to get inspired, educated or just a little more Jew-ish, consider the value of going to an in-person class, meeting with a Rabbi 1 on 1, or even handing some challah, person to person.

# PICKLE JEWS

## GALACTICALLY SYNDICATED COMIC STRIP



### Decisions and information imminent:

Stay tuned THIS WEEK for our (hopefully) final decisions on where, when and how (and if) camp will be running this summer, including COVID safety protocols.



Nageela West breaks the mold of old school Jewish outreach by providing out-of-the-box social and educational programs for Jewish children across the west coast. Through afterschool activities, weekend retreats and our signature summer camp, we engage elementary and middle school children in a fun and meaningful experience.

Our "questions encouraged" mindset makes Nageela a comfortable learning and growing environment for Jewish children of all backgrounds.